

Claims 1, 8, 11, 18, 21 and 22 have each been amended to recite that the female profile has an opening of width less than the width of the expanded head of the male member (or, in the case of claim 1, less than the width of the arrow-shaped male profile). This limitation clearly distinguishes over the zipper disclosed in the Scheibner patents, in which the so-called "male profile portion 18" has two male hook portions 22, each male hook portion having what arguably could be characterized as an expanded head. However, the width of the opening of the female profile portion 24 is not less than the width of either expanded headed. Therefore, none of amended independent claims 1, 8, 11, 18, 21 and 22 is anticipated by the Scheibner references.

In ¶ 6 of the Office Action, claims 7 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Scheibner '506 or Scheibner '702. The Applicants traverse this ground of rejection at least for the same reasons that claims 1 and 11, on which claims 7 and 17 respectively depend, are not anticipated by the Scheibner references.

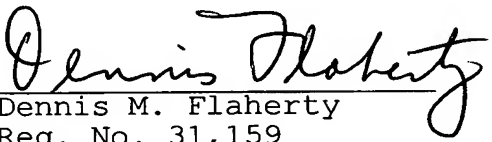
In view of the foregoing, the Applicants submit that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 1-23 are hereby requested. While the Applicants appreciate that the claims have been amended after a final rejection, it is respectfully submitted that prosecution would be efficiently

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advanced by an allowance at this juncture, since it is believed that no new search of the prior art is required by Applicants' claim amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on the date set forth below.

February 3, 2004
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